

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH  
[DRAFT] PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING  
JANUARY 29, 2009**

The Special Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2009, at the hour of 6:40 p.m., in the Police/Fire Conference Room, at 400/420 15<sup>th</sup> Street, in said City.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Present: Fasola, Paralusz, Powell, Seville-Jones and Chair Lesser  
Absent: None  
Staff Present: Richard Thompson, Laurie Jester, Michael Rocque  
Recording Secretary: Patricia Schilling

**B. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

None.

**C. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**1. Planning Commission Workshop to Discuss and Review a Comprehensive Update to the City's General Plan Housing Element.**

Director Thompson explained that the Special Meeting was called, per the Planning Commission's direction at the November 12, 2008 meeting after Staff presented their initial considerations to the Commission. The Workshop is designed to educate the Commission and public on the purpose of the Housing Element and the process that goes into creating the Element.

Director Thompson introduced Sandra Genis, of Sandra Genis Planning Resources, the consultant on the project, to present an overview of the State requirements. The Housing Element is part of the General Plan and State law requires that local governments review and update their Housing Element every five (5) years. The last one conducted by the City of Manhattan Beach was in 2003.

Ms. Genis explained that the Housing Element has been in effect since the 1980's. She explained over the years the Housing Element has developed in content and accountability. The State has specific requirements for each City and the number of affordable housing units required. It is the City's responsibility to adopt policy regarding the Housing Element and the 2008 laws require that the City also designate potential sites for these projects. She further explained that if a City chooses not to develop a policy regarding the second units in single family zones that the City would default to the State Ordinance.

**Discussion**

A lengthy discussion ensued among the Commissioners, consultant Sandra Genis, Director Thompson and the public;

Items addressed during the discussion were as follows:

- Clarification of the R1 zoning and the State requirements for the addition of a second family unit.
- Second family unit requirements, regarding parking, occupancy, etc.
- Second family units can not be sold as separate properties.
- Without a City driven policy the item automatically defaults to the State policy.

Consultant Genis reiterated the fact that it is a Statewide policy passed 3-4 years ago permitting R1 zoned properties to construct a second family unit. Ms. Genis also acknowledged that there were many limitations regarding density and number of units per acre.

The discussion continued with the Commissioners, Consultant Genis, Director Thompson and the public;

- Difficulty of providing the number of units required by the State based on affordability and the sq ft cost of property in Manhattan Beach
- Feasibility of constructing the number of units assigned to the City of Manhattan Beach based on density and arguments presented at SCAG sponsored meetings
- Consideration of the factors that impact the number of units; over crowding, over paying and employment
- Impact of lot merger ordinance on the number of units feasible
- Consideration for formulating a plan to encompass a regional approach to the problem of low income housing, working with other cities that have the space to construct the numbers needed to meet the State requirements
  - Director Thompson addressed this issue at the SCAG meetings and explained that each city has its own unique set of restrictions to consider and politically this is not a feasible option.
- Impact the LCP has on the reaching the number of low income housing units required
  - Land Use Element use to dictate housing but now it is deferred to the Housing Element.

Director Thompson suggested that the Commission make a recommendation to the Council regarding compliance with the State directed numbers and emphasized again the fact that if we don't have a second family unit requirement in place we have to default to the State policy requirements.

Consultant Genis explained that under State law the City can't build low income housing with General Funds without the voter's approval.

In response to a question raised by Commissioner Powell regarding how the City can reconcile the Housing Element item if it contradicts the General Plan, Director Thompson stated that all decisions made to date by the Planning Commission are consistent with the Housing Element and General Plan.

In an effort to return to determining policy and goals, Consultant Genis provided more

information regarding information in the Housing Element and State requirements relative to the City of Manhattan Beach;

- 87 homeless individuals need to be accounted for
- Accessibility for seniors and disabled needs to be addressed
- Possible infrastructure restraints - none
- Developer fees – not a problem
- A need to provide a variety of housing opportunities
- Revision of development standards (parking, open space) could be considered
- Inclusionary housing where feasible within coastal zone or 3 miles from coastal zone
- Regulating the conversion of condos
- Streamlining the development process
- Possibility of pre-fabricated housing
- Section 8 rental assistance and relation to the LA CDC
- Encourage Shared Housing for Seniors
- Initiate Fair Housing Program
- Buffering residential/commercial use properties
- Green buildings

Commission Chair Lesser suggested that the group focus on the list of possible sites the City has presented for additional housing and determine which ones were feasible and which sites they were opposed to.

Director Thompson concurred with this direction and suggested that policy issues be addressed once the site locations were discussed.

Discussion ensued among Commissioners tackling each proposed site on the handout provided by staff. The votes were as follows:

1. Sepulveda Commercial Corridor – all Commissioners Opposed  
The Commissioners cited the following main reasons for their opposition;
  - May have a negative impact on tax revenue for the city – mostly retail on Sepulveda
  - Current use of the Sepulveda corridor is consistent with the City’s General Plan
  - Could increase traffic on Sepulveda
  - The noise factor on Sepulveda and congestion would not be conducive to favorable living conditions, and other land use incompatibilities
2. School Sites Not Currently in Use- (if available) – all Commissioners Opposed  
The Commissioners cited the following main reasons for their opposition;
  - Could conflict with the City’s General Plan to provide enough adequate schooling
    - Appears that more younger families are moving into the area
  - Represent approximately 28% of the City’s park and open space
  - Conflicts with the City’s recreation needs
  - Site conditions – steep terrains and poor access
3. Armory Site (if available from Federal Government)  
The Commissioners cited the following main reasons for their opposition;
  - The area is not ideal for high density units

4. Manhattan Village Mall overflow parking lot – all Commissioners supported this site

The Commissioners cited the following main reasons for supporting this site;

- Location to mall
- Provide more Senior Housing adjacent to the existing senior housing in the area
- Has little use throughout most of the year
- Set back from Rosecrans corridor

The Commission directed Staff to explore additional site options:

- Aviation near Rosecrans
- Back of lots behind the commercial buildings along the Rosecrans corridor/ Parkview
- Further explore the use of the overflow parking lot currently leased to the Village Mall and Manhattan Beach Country Club

In summary the Commission made a number of recommendations to Staff and Consultant Genis on what specific items they would like to have returned to them for further discussion and consideration.

Chair Lesser asked for more information on the 2003 Housing Element plan along with the plan submitted in 1993. It was noted that the City received a waiver in 1998 because there were budget constraints with the State and Housing Elements were not required during that update period explaining the ten year gap between Housing Element updates. Chair Lesser also requested that Ms. Genis return with an Executive Summary of a possible Housing Element document.

Commissioner Powell supports a number of items laid out in the Housing Element presented for discussion tonight including;

- Preservation of existing neighborhoods
- Green Sustainable buildings
- Handicap Accessible
- Historical preservation
- Mixed Use where parking is available
- Permit Streamlining
- Additional Senior housing
- Preservation of the Quality of Life residents currently experience in Manhattan Beach

Commissioner Fasola asked that the Consultant provide a revised report reflecting the issues addressed in tonight's workshop.

Commissioner Seville-Jones stated that the Commission would need another meeting to determine policy and have a working document to present to Council for consideration and public discussion.

Commissioner Paralusz concurred with Chair Lesser's request for more information and an Executive Summary.

There were several residents in attendance that requested the statistics in the report be better summarized. They asked if the issue had been addressed with Assembly member Ted Lieu and other congressional representatives because they see it as a political issue.

Chair Lesser reiterated the fact that it was the Planning Commissions responsibility to present

recommendations for Council's consideration. He explained his concerns over developing something that was only aspirational when City Council will need to make decisions based on the information they provide.

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m. to Wednesday, February 11, 2009 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue

PATRICIA SCHILLING  
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

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RICHARD THOMPSON  
Community Development Director